IT'S ALL CONNECTED
ISSUE 310 JUNE 2017
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common ground

FREE MAGAZINE



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Electoral reform

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Scrumptious summer eats

Site C has no social contract

Spirit inspired ecology centre

Bob Bossin vs. Kinder Morgan

Big Pharma influences government

celebrate together orange & green

by Joseph Roberts

The Powers of GO The Green and Orange evolution

Sixty-five years is a lifetime without a minority government in BC. Now we have, just by the slimmest of margins, one! It is 41 NDP and 3 Greens vs. 43 Liberal Members of the Legislative Assembly.

A blessed granddaughter was born the day of the election. And like a new born baby this relationship between the Orange and Green needs TLC and nourishing. We dedicate this edition of *Common Ground* to all of us finding common ground to grow a better democracy.

This is not the first Orange and Green agreement, but certainly the first here in BC.

The Irish tricolour flag (Irish: bratach na hÉireann) is Green White Orange. The green represents the older Gaelic tradition while the orange represents the supporters of William of Orange. The white in the centre signifies the lasting truce between the 'Orange' and the 'Green'.

The Quare Fellas sang *The Orange and the Green* in 1960's, later sung by the The Irish Rovers. The song's lyrics tell the humorous story of a lad born into a mixed religious and political family.

"My father he was Orange and me mother she was Green" the son born of a Protestant dad and a Catholic mom. "My father was an Ulster man, proud Protestant was he. My mother was a Catholic girl, from county Cork was she." It brought a smile to my heart, you can listen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=63m-6zxfUyE

Making peace and forming agreements takes courage, creativity and also forgiveness in order to make our lives better.

We have friends in both the New Democratic and the Green parties. Prior to the election there was a lot of friction and animosity. Suspicion and animus raged between the two parties now in agreement. A number of NDP'ers were troubled by the Greens because they saw them as splitting the vote and keeping them out of power against the neo-liberals. Some Greens disliked the NDP.

Both sides have their stories to tell, their blame games, and their personal pains. No person or party in this situation is perfect, but then perfection can get in the way of progress. To have a progressive, democratic, environmentally aware governance of BC things had to progress.

The Greens have a lot to learn from the NDP and the NDP have a lot to learn from the Greens. Rekindled appreciation and respect will allow this now.

For 16 years the extractive capitalist and the donor class of the ruling Liberal-Conservative-Socred coalition, renamed BC Liberals, had free-rein to feed the profits from our land to the 1% while the middle working class watched powerlessly as Gordon Campbell-Christy Clark governments sold our province to the highest bidder. Big money ruled the body politic. There was no proportional representation. 39% of the vote took 100% of the power from the people, leaving 61% with no real representation.

We had taxation and exploitation without fair proportional representation. The NDP felt the impotence of sitting across from a ruling party that voted down any progressive motion they presented, such as taking big money out of politics which was crushed by their first-past-the-post (FPTP) overlords.

The sting was personal for John Horgan and the NDP who previously voted against electoral reform when the Single Transferable Vote STV referendum was offered.

Since then, the NDP realized while sitting in opposition how FPTP condemned them to democratic poverty with no real power against a BC Liberal majority government who, with only 39% of the popular vote, pushed through egregious legislation and slashed health, social or education budgets.

After watching the Christy Clark train-wreck in slow motion, they have realized that in order to have a government for the people the system has to be unrigged from the infrastructure and process that served the Liberals donor class. Get big money the hell out of politics and instill a proportional representation electoral process.

The Greens had already built these two principles into their platform and so the common ground was in place for John Horgan and Andrew Weaver to cooperate in order to better serve the people of BC.

And the magic happened. A minority government with the Greens holding the balance of power! The first time in Canada's history. So, we stand before this amazing opportunity to bring real democracy and fairness into the governance of BC.

It has been said that when the people lead the politicians will follow. And the only real safe place for democracy is in the hearts and minds of the people themselves. So lets take out some life insurance for this new and fragile unity by getting to know each other whether you are Orange or Green.

We at Common Ground invite the members of the NDP Party and the Green Party to actually party together and meet each other face to face, share food and joy.

Of course, all are welcome who voted Green or Orange to come out and really get to know each other.

We really have more in common than we know. It is through connecting in person that friendship is built. With direct experience of each other we can develop the necessary trust to grow strong. Let's be resistant to the divide and conquer techniques of the previous FPTP divisive electoral rules. Yes, we can move beyond hostile partisanship into a joint appreciation. We can cooperate together and better operate the levers of political power through a fairer, more democratic process to serve the 99% rather than just the 1%.

This may seem radical but at one time it was deemed radical to have women vote, or, it was unthinkable if one was a slave, to be truly free. Such is the moment we live in now.

But our effort did not end when we cast our single vote. Rather, the recent election has given us this golden opportunity. Now let's solidify our goodwill. We can reverse the economic and environment damage done by former government's controllers, who, being in power for too long, became arrogant, entitled and corrupt.

This is a new day for British Columbia and a beginning of a new era for Canada and what better time than on Canada's 150th birthday. Just as UN-Habitat I and Greenpeace were born in BC and spread east across Canada, then across the globe, we at this time can stand for a truly people-focused democracy based on our shared values and common goals. And done well, this will be BC's greatest gift to the rest of Canada on our 150th birthday. Implicit in this renewal is the honouring of those whose cultures were here long before the most recent 150 years, and to work together in the spirit of reconciliation with First Nations for the betterment of all.

Here is the opening section of the agreement signed by the leaders and caucus of both parties. Please do take the time to read the whole document on-line at the NDP or Green Party's website, or at commonground.ca

2017 Confidence and Supply Agreement between the BC Green Caucus and the BC New Democrat Caucus

This agreement between the BC Green Caucus and the BC New Democrat Caucus is effective [2017], for four years, or until the next fixed date election as set by the BC Constitution Act.

Section 1 – Foundation of Relationship

This agreement establishes the basis for which the BC Green Caucus will provide confidence in a BC New Democrat Government. It is not intended to lay out the full program of a New Democrat Government, nor is it intended to presume BC Green support for initiatives not found within this agreement.

Both the BC New Democrats and the BC Greens campaigned for a government that put people at the centre of their decision-making. Our policy proposals included many points of agreement, including:

1. Making democracy work for people
2. Creating jobs, acting on climate change, and building a sustainable economy that works for everyone
3. Fixing the services people count on
4. Making life more affordable for people

This agreement sets out a new relationship between the two parties, founded on the principle of "good faith and no surprises".

Both parties agree that the legislature works best when all MLAs are able to put forward good ideas – and come together – to support those that advance the public good.

Remember, this is only the beginning. May we all find common ground and make our province, country and world a better place for peace and prosperity from this day forward.

Erin is a derivative of the Irish word for Ireland - "Éire". Erin used for both sexes, is principally a feminine forename. Erin is also a name for Ireland in Welsh and one of the most popular girls' names in Wales.

The baby mentioned at the beginning is named Erin.

So host a Orange and Green house party, block party, musical concert, improv flash mob, country fair, farmers market or any other place where people can gather together. Get creative and initiate you own celebration to bring both Green and Orange together. It is up to each one of us now.

Clean tech good jobs are going green

by Bruce Mason



New York City 1908. Where are the cars?



Detroit 1910. Where are the horses?

There's light at the end of the tunnel and it's solar powered and unstoppable. Fossil fools, who still have their heads buried in tar-sands and other 20th century technologies, can't see it and risk being totally blind-sided. But for those who "get it," the bozone layer is lifting around the world, particularly in places where new, common-sense, but revolutionary, vision is promoted and nurtured.

One way to grasp the inevitable and transformative nature of this powerful emergent force is through the term "disruptive technology." It refers to new approaches that overturn traditional business methods and practices. History dubs these pivotal times as ages, such as stone, bronze, iron and information. We're taught how the industrial age quickly displaced agriculture and how steam speedily overpowered previous forms of harnessing energy. In our lifetime, we've actually witnessed, first-hand, the Internet overtaking snail-mail and the virtual disappearance of video rentals and industries, from media to music, which have been forced to cope, in desperation, with changed and challenging realities.

Just five years ago, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) completed its first survey of renewable energy jobs. In 2012, five million people were employed in the sector worldwide. In their just released report, that number doubled to 9.8 million for 2016.

The countries with the largest renewable jobs are Brazil, China, Germany, India, Japan and the US. Remember when knuckle-dragging "Drill Baby, Drill" advocates rationalized turning their backs on reducing emissions, citing that China and India, highly populated and underdeveloped, weren't up to the task so why did they have to be? Well, coal-rich China, which now has the largest share of renewable energy jobs – 3.5 million – is home to the world's largest floating solar farm.

As Donald J. Trump touts massive job growth in something called clean coal, India cancelled plans for that form of filthy energy in favour of plummeting solar prices. In fact, 62 percent of the renewable jobs are located in Asia where much of solar panel manufacturing is taking place. And IRENA predicts renewable energy jobs will number 24 million by 2030, outpacing the loss of fossil fuel jobs.

Closer to home, where we don't make the top renewable job list, Justin Trudeau approved Kinder Morgan with the statement, "No country would find 173 billion barrels of oil in the ground and just leave them there." That's news to oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, which just launched a $50-billion investment in renewable energy.

In Vancouver, IRENA director-general Adnan Amin explained the massive global transition to renewable energy: "They're doing this not because they've suddenly become climate advocates or they're against oil, but because they see the future in a very different way and they know that energy in the future is not going to be what it is today."

So-called "leaders," from presidents and prime ministers to governors and premiers, are tone-deaf if they think voters are torn over the transition to clean energy. In BC, for example, the "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs" mantra is now discredited oligarchy propaganda. A new poll from from Abacus Data indicates that two-thirds of Canadians favour prioritizing economic growth in ways that don't involve fossil fuels. And *continued p.22…*

A new poll from from Abacus Data indicates that two-thirds of Canadians favour prioritizing economic growth in ways that don't involve fossil fuels. And Americans don't lag far behind in the recognition of the urgent and essential need to tank fossil fuels.

common ground

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Publications Mail Agreement No. 40011171
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to
Circulation Dept., Head office
ISSN No. 0824-0698

Head Office
Common Ground Publishing Corp.
3152 West 8th Ave.
Vancouver, BC V6K 2C3

Copies printed: 70,000
Over 250,000 readers per issue
Survey shows 3 to 4 readers/copy
plus online at www.commonground.ca

100% owned and operated by Canadians.
Published 12 times a year in Canada.

Annual subscription is $75 (US$75) for one year (12 issues). Single issues are $6 (specify issue #). Payable by cheque, Visa, MasterCard, Interac or money order.

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It`s better to do it together

Both parties began as movements based on important principles and ethics.

The New Democratic Party began as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) as a social democratic political party in Canada. The CCF was founded in 1932 in Calgary, Alberta by a number of socialist, agrarian, cooperative, and labour groups, and the League for Social Reconstruction. In 1944, the CCF formed the first social-democratic government in North America when it was elected to form the provincial government in Saskatchewan. In 1961, the CCF was succeeded by the New Democratic Party (NDP).

The Green Party grew out of important environmental, anti-nuclear, peace and ecology movements. It formally organized as a political party based on the interconnection of green politics, social justice, ecology and non-violence which are inherently related to one another as a foundation for world peace. Both the Green Party of Canada and the BC Green Party were formed in 1983. Green parties now exist in 90 countries.

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**Reference:* *Anti-Influenza virus activities of commercial oregano oils and their carriers. Journal of Applied Pharmaceutical Science 2012; 02(07) 214-18.*



We've got good people and evidence

All we need now are good institutions

Consider just a few classes of drugs that are pretty universally, but irrationally, used. For example statins, drugs that lower cholesterol, likely produce very little benefit for the vast numbers of the population who swallow them, and some are harmed in the process. Antihypertensives, drugs that lower blood pressure, are prescribed to seniors to such an extent that they are more likely to increase the risk of hip fractures than prevent a heart attack. And attention deficit disorder drugs are often prescribed to boys who can't sit still in boring and unstimulating school classes.

These are just three examples emblematic of the problems of overuse and inappropriate use of pharmaceuticals, in which we see major waste in drug spending and possible harm to the population.

Even though physicians want to do the right thing, and we consumers are often reluctant to take drugs if we don't absolutely need them, why do we see so much irrational pharmaceutical consumption? What if I told you part of the answer comes down to politics? For a provincial government that spends upwards of $1.5 billion per year on medications, decisions around drug coverage and prescribing policies are often political, not medical.

Ensuring that drugs are only prescribed when needed, to patients who would derive great benefit from taking them, needs to be reinforced by a system based on good scientific evidence, not politics. So how do we get there?

What we've seen in BC and around the world is that when a democratically elected government enacts policies that lead to rational and better prescribing (sometimes causing drug companies to see their profits suffer), the pharmaceutical industry will not hesitate to resort to all manner of political games. And when those fail, they use the courts.

We saw this in 1996 when BC PharmaCare was sued by Big Pharma under the banner of PMAC (Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada) for implementing evidence-based drug coverage rules that saved the taxpayers millions. At stake was a policy of paying for a 'reference' price in a class of drugs, forcing the competing drug makers to lower their prices. It worked and was supported by both the public and the courts (Big Pharma lost the lawsuit), but it also sent a clear message to future governments: you will anger us at your peril.

About a decade ago, Big Pharma also sued the National Institutes of Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the UK. This group examines the evidence of benefit and harm of new pharmaceuticals and then makes recommendations on whether the drugs should be covered in UK's National Health System. They have turned down drugs for colon cancer (Avastin) that show little benefit and drugs for Alzheimer's (Aricept), which are widely prescribed but almost completely ineffective, if not harmful. Whenever a government has good scientific evidence to show that coverage of a drug or certain class of drugs is not in the public interest, one major tactic from Big Pharma is to destroy the group that produces the evidence.

That's one tactic we've seen here in BC with our own group, the Therapeutics Initiative (TI) at UBC, whose commitment to the evidence make them a natural drug industry target. Over the years, the drug lobbyists, speaking into the ears of legislators, have said the TI has an anti-drug bias and isn't transparent when it comes to assessing new drugs, but I would disagree. As a group that favours conservative, rational prescribing, in contrast to the hucksters out there, the TI's advice to doctors is that they shouldn't use a new drug until there is positive (and independent) evidence of benefit.

For a provincial government that spends upwards of $1.5 billion per year on medications, decisions around drug coverage and prescribing policies are often political, not medical.

Now that we have a new government in BC, or at least the political structure where compromise and consensus will be necessary, it's prime time to create a system shielded from the political power of the pharmaceutical industry. Because pharmaceuticals are such a vital, costly and central part of our health system, any reforms brought in on the provincial health front must be structured to reduce the waste and inefficiency in the drug budget. And those reforms must be resilient, above politics so to speak, to ensure they can't be thrown aside the moment one drug company is upset because their blockbuster drug isn't deemed worthy of public coverage, and they send their lobbyists to sort out the Minister of Health or the Premier.

There is a short list of examples of models from around the world to emulate. A group in Ontario called ICES (Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences) gets provincial money to evaluate drug evidence and medical procedures and they are independent from government. The scientists who work there are (generally) protected from the mud-wrestling of provincial or pharmaceutical politics so their reports can be trusted. And as previously mentioned, there is NICE, established in the late 1990s as part of the UK's Department of Health, and now called NIHC, the National Institutes for Health and Care Excellence). While it has weathered political attacks, the structure of the organization as an independent agency allows it to sustain pharma's frequent criticism, emboldened to serve the health care needs of UK's citizens.

The new NDP-Green accord is getting set to run the province. One of their platforms is to get back to essentials and implement an "essential drug program." This is a fabulous idea, but in order to determine what is essential from the drug cabinet, you need weapons-grade expertise and a resilient political structure to be able to withstand Pharma's political slings and arrows. Making provincial-level decisions about what new drugs to cover, needs, most of all, scientific certainty, untainted by the manufacturer's one-sided view of the value of their products.

Such a structure should be like the Therapeutics Initiative, funded for studying evidence and supplying government decision makers with distilled summaries of research to support the hard decisions on drug funding. The TI's UBC affiliations have been helpful in fending off pharma attacks, but this new institution would need multi-year, stable funding. You could easily fund such an institution by halting the automatic coverage of classes of drugs that are deemed unnecessary, unhelpful and possibly harmful. Hmm, maybe statins for everyone, antihypertensives in the elderly or ADHD drugs in children?

Providing independent and science-based decisions around drug coverage decisions would make such an institution a big target of Pharma's attacks. In fact, the more successful it is in asserting evidence around the value and cost effectiveness of new drugs, the more it will be hated by Big Pharma, and their minions, including specialists and patient groups who are often used as Pharma's foot soldiers in battling for the control of the public narrative.

Why is now the time for such an initiative? For starters, the Green Party says they are committed to evidence-based policy and so it makes sense they'd be natural supporters of making evidence and evaluation centrepieces of healthcare services. They want to get the 'big money' out of politics and policymaking so what would be better than an agency free from political influence to produce evidence on policy and program effectiveness, protected from Big Pharma and other vested interests?

We've seen groups like NICE or ICES have a big influence on policy and practice, free from the whipsawing of politics and able to focus on local policies and programs. In BC, we have another great asset in our PharmaNet system so that rapid, low-cost evaluations of drug policies can happen. We've been world leaders and we have some of the best scientists able to use these administrative databases to study drug policy. What we need now is a politics-free institute to house them. A great opportunity for a new government in this province.

Alan Cassels is a writer and former drug policy researcher. His latest book is **The Cochrane Collaboration: Medicine's Best Kept Secret**. Follow him on twitter @AKECassels

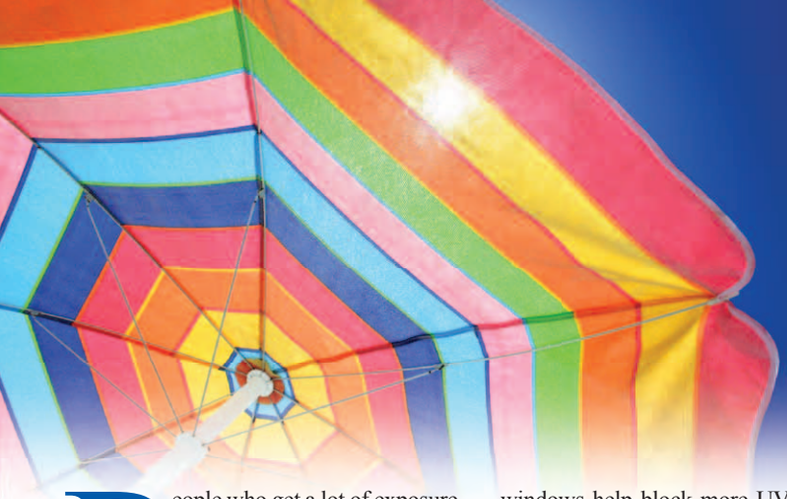


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UV rays & you

People who get a lot of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays are at greater risk for skin cancer. Sunlight is the main source of UV rays, but you don't have to avoid the sun completely. And it would be unwise to stay inside if it would keep you from being active because physical activity is important for good health. But getting too much sun can be harmful. There are some steps you can take to limit your exposure to UV rays. Some people think about sun protection only when they spend a day at the lake, beach, or pool. But sun exposure adds up day after day and it happens every time you are in the sun.

An obvious, but very important, way to limit your exposure to UV light is to avoid being outdoors in direct sunlight too long. This is particularly important between the hours of 10AM and 4PM when UV light is strongest. If you are unsure how strong the sun's rays are, use the shadow test; if your shadow is shorter than you are, the sun's rays are the strongest and it's important to protect yourself.

UV rays reach the ground all year, even on cloudy or hazy days, but the strength of UV rays can change based on the time of year and other factors. UV rays become more intense in the spring even before temperatures get warmer. People in some areas may get sunburned when the weather is still cool because they may not think about protecting themselves if it's not hot out. Be especially careful on the beach or in areas with snow because sand, water and snow reflect sunlight, increasing the amount of UV radiation you get. UV rays can also reach below the water's surface so you can still get a burn even if you're in the water and feeling cool.

Some UV rays can also pass through windows. Typical car, home and office windows block most UVB rays, but a smaller portion of UVA rays, so even if you don't feel you're getting burned your skin may still get some damage. Tinted windows help block more UVA rays, but this depends on the type of tinting.

If you plan to be outdoors, you may want to check the UV Index for your area. The UV Index usually can be found in local newspapers, TV, radio, and online forecasts.

Protect your skin with clothing: When you are out in the sun, wear clothing to cover your skin. Clothes provide different levels of UV protection. Long-sleeved shirts, long pants or long skirts cover the most skin and are the most protective. Dark colours generally provide more protection than light colours. A tightly woven fabric protects better than loosely woven clothing. Dry fabric is generally more protective than wet fabric.

Be aware that covering up doesn't block out all UV rays. If you can see light through a fabric, UV rays can get through, too. Many companies now make clothing that's lightweight, comfortable and protects against UV exposure even when wet. It tends to be more tightly woven and some have special coatings to help absorb UV rays. These sun-protective clothes may have a label listing the UV protection factor (UPF) value (the level of protection the garment provides from the sun's UV rays, on a scale from 15 to 50+). The higher the UPF, the higher the protection from UV rays.

Some products, which are used like laundry detergents in a washing machine, can increase the UPF value of clothes you already own. They add a layer of UV protection to your clothes without changing the colour or texture. This can be useful, but it's not exactly clear how much it adds to protecting you from UV rays so it's still important to follow the other steps listed here.

Use sunscreen: It's important to know that sunscreen is just a filter; it does not block all UV rays. Sunscreen should not be used as a way to prolong your time in the sun. Even with proper sunscreen use, some UV rays still get through. Because of this, sunscreen should not be thought of as your first line of defence. Consider sunscreen as one part of your skin cancer protection plan, especially if staying in the shade and wearing protective clothing aren't available as your first options.

Read the labels: Sunscreens with broad spectrum protection (against both UVA and UVB rays) and with sun protection factor (SPF) values of 30 or higher are recommended.

> Sunscreens are no longer allowed to be labelled as "waterproof" or "sweatproof" because these terms can be misleading.

Sun protection factor (SPF): The SPF number is the level of protection the sunscreen provides against UVB rays, which are the main cause of sunburn. A higher SPF number means more UVB protection (although it says nothing about UVA protection). For example, when applying an SPF 30 sunscreen correctly, you get the equivalent of 1 minute of UVB rays for each 30 minutes you spend in the sun. So, one hour in the sun wearing SPF 30 sunscreen is the same as spending two minutes totally unprotected. People often do not apply enough sunscreen so they get less actual protection.

Sunscreens labelled with SPFs as high as 100+ are available. Higher numbers do mean more protection, but many people don't understand the SPF scale. SPF 15 sunscreens filter out about 93% of UVB rays, while SPF 30 sunscreens filter out about 97%, SPF 50 sunscreens about 98%, and SPF 100 about 99%. The higher you go, the smaller the difference becomes. No sunscreen protects you completely.

Sunscreens with an SPF lower than 15 must now include a warning on the label stating that the product has been shown only to help prevent sunburn, not skin cancer or early skin aging.

Broad spectrum sunscreen: Sunscreen products can only be labelled "broad spectrum" if they have been tested and shown to protect against both UVA and UVB rays. Some of the chemicals in sunscreens that help protect against UVA rays include avobenzone (Parsol 1789), ecamsule, zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Only broad spectrum sunscreen products with an SPF of 15 or higher can state that they help protect against skin cancer and early skin aging if used as directed with other sun protection measures.

Water resistant sunscreen: Sunscreens are no longer allowed to be labelled as "waterproof" or "sweatproof" because these terms can be misleading. Sunscreens can claim to be "water resistant," but they have to state whether they protect the skin for 40 or 80 minutes of swimming or sweating, based on testing.

Expiration dates: Check the expiration date on the sunscreen to be sure it's still effective. Most sunscreen products are good for at least two to three years, but you may need to shake the bottle to remix the sunscreen ingredients. Sunscreens that have been exposed to heat for long periods, such as if they were kept in a glove box or car trunk through the summer, may be less effective.

Wear sunglasses that block UV rays: UV-blocking sunglasses are important for protecting the delicate skin around the eyes, as well as the eyes themselves. Research has shown that long hours in the sun without protecting your eyes increase your chances of developing certain eye diseases.

The ideal sunglasses should block 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB rays. Before you buy, check the label to make sure they do. Labels that say "UV absorption up to 400 nm" or "Meets ANSI UV Requirements" mean the glasses block at least 99% of UV rays. Those labelled "cosmetic" block about 70% of UV rays. If there is no label, don't assume the sunglasses provide any UV protection.

Source: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org

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Summer fare

When we get a spontaneous invite to a picnic, one easy choice is to stop by a supermarket or natural foods store and pick up one or more varieties of hummus or guacamole along with an assortment of raw veggies or crackers. If we have a little more preparation time before a barbecue or other event, here are two recipes that are sure to be enjoyed.

Portobello mushrooms are a favourite plant-based burger. They are easy to prepare and take on the flavour of whichever marinade you choose. For a cookout, serve these on whole-grain buns. For an easy meal at home, serve them on a bed of grains with a salad or beside the quinoa salad that follows. This burger recipe is adapted from www.forksoverknives.com

Portobello mushroom burgers

3 tbs. low-sodium tamari or soy sauce
3 tbs. maple syrup or other sweetener
3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 tbs. grated ginger
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
4 large portobella mushrooms, stemmed

For marinade, combine tamari, maple syrup, garlic, ginger and pepper in a small bowl; mix well. Place mushrooms, stem side up, on a dish. Pour the marinade over the mushrooms and let marinate for 1 hour. Prepare the grill. Pour excess marinade off the mushrooms, reserving the liquid. Place mushrooms on the grill. Grill each side for 4 minutes, brushing with marinade every few minutes. Variation: during the last few minutes of grilling, brush mushrooms with barbecue sauce.

Fiesta quinoa salad with lime dressing (makes 4 1/2 cups)

This recipe is from the popular *Cooking Vegetarian* by Melina and Forest (HarperCollins). Quinoa is an ancient grain, native to the high Andes regions of South America, introduced to North America in the 1980s. It is often called a "supergrain" because of its excellent protein content and nutritional profile.

Cooking quinoa

1-1/2 cups water
1 cup quinoa, rinsed and drained
1/2 tsp. salt

Bring water to boil over high heat, stir in quinoa and salt, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until all water is absorbed. Set aside to cool.

Lime dressing

3 tbsp lime juice
2-3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp. toasted sesame oil
Pinch pepper

Combine lime juice, olive oil, sesame oil, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Pour over cooled quinoa mixture and toss gently with fork. Adjust seasoning.

Assemble salad

1/2 cup diced cucumber
1/2 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen
1/4 cup diced sweet red pepper
2 tbsp. finely chopped green onion (optional)
4 tsp. finely chopped parsley or cilantro

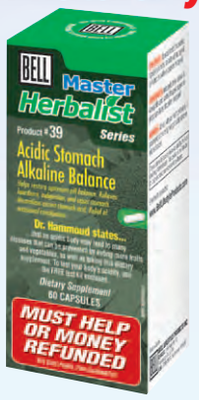
Add the cucumber, corn, red pepper, green onion (if using) and parsley to the dressed quinoa. Stir well to incorporate all ingredients. Adjust the seasoning and serve.

Vesanto Melina is a Vancouver dietitian (www.nutrispeak.com) and co-author of the award winning **Becoming Vegan: Comprehensive Edition**. Once a month, she co-hosts a "Snackluck" event at Vancouver Cohousing with Meatless Meetup. Everyone brings a delicious vegan snack to share. Sometimes, there is a small fee to cover the film rental.

EVENT **Friday June 30, 7:15pm: "Snackluck":** includes a Q&A and discussion based on audience interest. Bring any questions related to plant-based nutrition. www.meetup.com/MeatlessMeetup/events vesanto.melina@gmail.com

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Testimonials from our website: ■ **"Erosyn saved my marriage!** I'm overjoyed! My libido is back. Words cannot describe how grateful I am." *Carla Daunais, 32, St-Hubert, QC.* ■ **"My sexual desire is greater now** than it was for thirty years. It's wonderful to have such ecstatic joy. I've tried other products that didn't work." *Eve Jameson, 58, Kingman, AZ.* Erosyn is GMO Free and Allergen Free.

Urinary Incontinence (including stress incontinence): If a woman suffers with urinary incontinence, Bell Lifestyle has two effective products that may help within a few days. In stores, ask for Bladder Control Tea for Women (Product #4b) and Bladder One for Women (Product #90). We have helped tens of thousands of women worldwide to lead a normal life again. No more rushing to the bathroom, leakage or wetness. Satisfaction is guaranteed.

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Founder's own story: Eighteen years ago, I developed arthritis, as well as prostate, kidney, and snoring problems, which were all helped quickly with natural health products. I made it my life's purpose to help others. *Nick A. Jerch.*

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Mac McLaughlin

StarWise

June 2017

THE SUN TRAVELS through Gemini until June 20. Gemini is a mutable air sign, mutable in the sense that we just cannot jump from the rainy cool days of early spring into the intense heat of the summer season. There has to be a period of adaptability as nature adjusts to the climatic changes taking place. The element of air in astrology relates to the intellect and reasoning faculties. We're inspired. Spring has sprung and we're out and about doing our thing along with the birds and the bees. Everything is beautiful, fresh and new. Likened to this time in nature, the souls that are born into Gemini are blessed with angelic qualities. Myriad artists, poets, musicians, intellectuals, educators, business types, promoters, sales people and others with a great litany of intellectual capabilities are – and were – born at this time. Mercury is the planetary ruler of this sign. Castor and Pollux are the twin stars ruling the constellation of Gemini; curiously, one of the twins was a boxer and the other an intellectual.

So far we have portrayed Gemini as an angelic sign, but don't be fooled or misled by this. Being of the element of air, some Geminis can be devoid of deeper feelings, which may manifest as hard-heartedness and cruelty. Generally, they're sweet and kind, but if crossed or the energy is distorted in some way, they can wreak havoc and cause serious pain and consequences without giving it too much thought later. They can shake your hand with one hand and have the other hand in your back pocket at the same time. Remember Gemini Trump commenting on that woman that must be bleeding. Although we all knew what he really meant, he said later he meant a nosebleed and that anyone who thought otherwise was despicable. Ya, sure, Donald. Gemini is known to be amoral, meaning if you didn't catch them at it, they didn't do it.

Let's get back to the high side of this very interesting and highly complex sign. When you come across a Gemini that is flying right, they are a delight. Highly gifted, multi-talented and generous to a fault describes the angelic Gemini. On the other hand, my Gemini stepdad astonished me one day when he stuck his head out of the window and yelled at the kids playing in the yard to cut that Gdamned swearing out! He also saved a woman from being attacked in our yard one night, but after scaring off the attacker, he would not allow the woman into our house. Got to love those Geminis.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.



ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19
Aries is like the knight who jumps on his charger and goes off in all directions at the same time. The stars are in a good position and are offering many opportunities for you to get it right. Your earning potential is strong and moving to a new residence may be on your mind.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21
Creative energy is running high all month. A busy time is indicated. Wheeling and dealing takes place as all kinds of opportunities manifest. Love is in the air and the instinct to make all things beautiful is strong. It's a good time to get on with the projects you have been thinking about all winter.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20
Read the introduction. It's about Gemini. Now, the Sun is in your sign, bringing you into your solar high of the year. You may have a nine-ball juggling act going on, as all kinds of scenarios manifest. Do your best and do what you do best, which is to get out and mix and mingle.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22
Energetic Mars visits Cancer for several weeks. He fires you up and inspires you in all kinds of ways, but watch for overload and knee-jerk reactions. Things can get slightly out of control when Mars is around so go easy and remember to measure twice and cut once. Do something bold and be brave.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22
Your solar house of friendships is strongly activated, indicating that this is the right time to go on a walk-about or a journey of some sort. Now's the time to connect with others. Minor surgeries could take place and the time is right to deal with any type of annoying health problem.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22
Your solar career sector is hot and it may be wise to crank up the energy a bit. Travel and career are both hot topics throughout June and July. Earning power and potential are especially strong. What you start now may serve you well over the next 15 years. You're coming out of your shell.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22
When a planet appears to stand still, it is at its greatest power. Jupiter, which is known as the great benefactor, is standing still in the middle of Libra. It's a strong signal for you to truly drive towards your goals and aspirations. Jupiter brings trust, faith, truth, good timing and confidence into the picture.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21
It's your time to go deep and long and delve into the topics that are of keen interest to you. Joint monies, wills, legacies and investments come up now. Your solar house of partnerships is strongly activated and a new relationship could blossom in the near future. Existing relationships get a boost as well.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21
The storm clouds are dissipating. Many lessons were learned in the last couple of years. No doubt, a deep wisdom has been carved into your soul. A new light dawns and new pathways appear on the horizon. A flood of fresh ideas are beginning to congeal and soon enough you will be on a fresh journey.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19
A Capricorn friend commented that, while running a small business, he felt under challenged. He changed that and took on some big challenges and became very successful. You might be in the mood now to do something extraordinary. Go for it. The next step is the hardest step, but eventually you will reach your goal.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19
The big planets are in good position for Aquarius. It's a signal to move towards your goals. Your solar house of travel, spirituality and foreign affairs is strongly activated. This is also a good time for any type of educational pursuit along with publishing and promotional activities. A move or renovation could take place.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20
Neptune, co-ruler of Pisces, is standing still in the middle of your sign. He's an unusual planet and brings significant and oft-times genius gifts to the souls that have him prominent in their birth charts. A new dawn and a new reality may be taking shape. Follow your intuition and your dreams and dream big.

First-past-the-post

Canada's democracy a convenient fiction

by Kelly Carmichael

Politicians hold up democracy like the gold standard although few would be able to define it. They affirm that expressing your will at the ballot box is key to a functioning democracy. Yet citizens have no power to effect change, despite the fact they fund the infrastructure of government through their tax dollars.

> Winner-take-all majoritarian systems offer an illusion of choice, but are actually designed to keep the commons out. You can vote for a candidate, but your options to effectively elect an MP aligned with your political values is quite slim.

What many do not compute is that all policy decisions find their foundation in the way we allocate power through our electoral system. Winner-take-all majoritarian systems offer an illusion of choice, but are actually designed to keep the commons out. You can vote for a candidate, but your options to effectively elect an MP aligned with your political values is quite slim. In 2015, over 9,000,000 Canadians chose losing candidates.

The other problem with first-past-the-post voting is the system most often returns skewed results. When we say 39% 'majorities,' that illustrates the total amount of votes for a winning party, but the inconvenient truth behind that number reveals that half of those voters voted for the winning party in ridings where an opposition candidate won. Many would be surprised to hear that a mere 4.6 million Canadians elected the 184 MPs that hold all the power in our House of Commons.

Providing such a small minority all the power in our government makes accountability very precarious and illusive. For instance, it would appear the government is very busy consulting on a variety of issues: electoral reform, trade, climate change, etc. These exercises provide a slick semblance of transparency and government accountability.

Unfortunately, most of these consultations expose a well orchestrated political theatre and lack the proper mechanisms and outcomes for responding to the evidence or the will of the people.

When you drill down into the consultations set up by the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE), you find 88% of the experts who expressed an opinion on systems told the government to implement some form of proportional representation (PR). Additionally, 87% of the public who testified at the public hearings asked the government to move to a proportional system. The ERRE's own online survey found strong support for both the principle of PR and specific proportional systems.

This consultation was the 14th of its kind in Canada. Each one recommended moving to proportional representation. Add this to the fact that 80% of OECD Countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) use PR and a body of research spanning 50 years suggests you get better democracy and governance through PR.

Alarmingly, the more the evidence and public sentiment pointed to proportional representation, the more the Liberals seemed to retreat citing they could not find 'consensus.'

In November of 2016, Justin Trudeau announced that perhaps electoral reform wasn't as important since now he was Prime Minister. In February of 2017, the Prime Minister sent his newly minted Minister of Democratic Institutions, Karina Gould, out to face the media and tell Canadians the government had chosen to kill the file. A few weeks later, addressing a room of citizens and reporters, Trudeau announced killing electoral reform was his decision to make. Most suspect the decision was made in the shadowy backroom of the PMO.

Trudeau has since admitted that he was, and remains, an advocate of the alternative vote system (AV) – a ranked ballot used in a majoritarian winner-take-all system – which is basically first-past-the-post on steroids, a phony reform that continues to guarantee that up to half of all voters in every riding remain unable to elect the MP they prefer.

The truth was the Liberals could not find consensus for Justin Trudeau's preferred system so they killed it.

The Liberals are leaving the once condemned first-past-the-post scheme intact along with their own undeserved domination of the House of Commons.

Kelly Carmichael is the executive director of Fair Vote Canada, @kellycarmichae1

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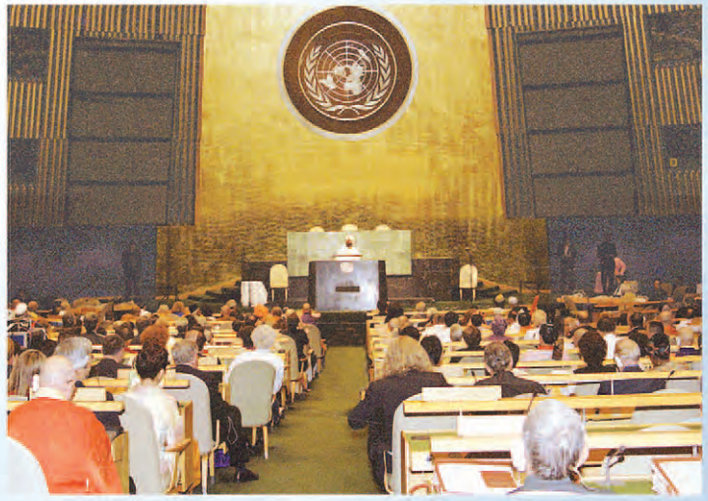
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Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj's prayer at the United Nations 2000 Millennium Peace Summit.

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The high cost of a lie

Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters. – Albert Einstein

I had an interesting experience recently that got me thinking about honesty and integrity. I called a local nail salon late afternoon on a Saturday to make a Sunday appointment. I was actually trying to google the number of my regular salon when this new one popped up. It was a little closer to home so I thought I would give it a try as the web page looked pretty good.

I booked the appointment and the lady called me right back. She asked me to bring cash explaining, "My bank is closed on Sunday." Of course I was puzzled and did not want to make an extra trip to a banking machine. I told her I did not have cash and she said," Okay this time, but next time bring cash."

When I arrived the next day, she was very friendly and put a lot of energy into promoting her business. She had just finished doing pedicures for a young couple in a long-distance relationship. He was returning to the US later in the day and his girlfriend had treated him to his first ever pedicure. She wanted to do something nice on his last day here.

If we lie to another, we are disrespecting them *and* ourselves…It is always a lose/lose.

When they went to pay, she said "cash only." The woman did not have the cash and became quite flustered. She offered her Mastercard only to be told they don't take Mastercard. In the end, the guy ended up paying with his Visa while the woman assured him she would pay him back. It was a very awkward ending to what was meant to be a special time.

I felt very uncomfortable witnessing this. Then, with a bright smile, she came to me and began my pedicure. She explained why her salon was different from others and how she was so much more conscientious about keeping nails healthy. In fact, she did an excellent job. So good, in fact, that I thought of switching salons. When it came time to pay, she accepted my Visa, but reminded me, "Next time cash."

As I returned home, something weighed heavily on my mind. Each time I looked at my lovely nails, I could only think of how she lied to me right from the start. I thought about how bubbly the woman was about treating her boyfriend and how the whole cash business soured their experience.

I won't be going back. I wonder how many others have never returned having seen or sensed this side, which is ego driven and out of integrity.

Years ago, I knew a woman who was into online dating. She was in her late forties or early fifties. She was beautiful, intelligent and good company. She looked somewhat younger than her years so she posted her age as somewhat less that her actual age.

She may have shaved off a bit too much because the man asked her how old she really was. When she told him, the first date was over. He said, "If you lied to me about that, what else will you lie about?"

Both women lost out on opportunities that could have been good in the long run. Perhaps people think others cannot see through their lies. Even if they are fooled, the relationship is still based on lies. If we lie to another, we are disrespecting them *and* ourselves. A lie is a manipulation of another to serve our own ends. It can never be a win/win. It is always a lose/lose.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, "Deep Powerful Change" hypnosis CDs and "Creating Effective Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca. 'Like' Gwen on Facebook for daily inspiration.

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– Marie Curie



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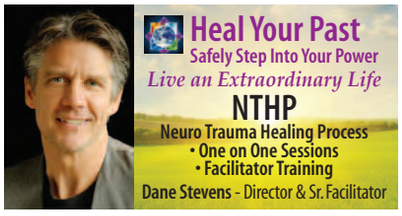
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– Rumi

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...***Letters*** *from pg. 19*

Act in Bad Faith?"

In a 2014 Supreme Court decision, there is a requirement that all contracts, to be valid, can only be agreed upon if all parties are acting in Good Faith. Justice Thomas Cromwell wrote, "...good faith contractual performance is a general organizing principle of the common law of contract… recognizes obligations of good faith contractual performance… a common law duty… applies to all contracts to act honestly in the performance of contractual obligations."

This would apply to entering into contracts as well as contract performance.

Reference: http://business.financialpost.com/legal-post/supreme-court-of-canada-updates-common-law-to-make-good-faith-an-implied-term-of-all-contracts

Evidence of "Bad Faith"

Lack of project need, lower cost of alternatives and public opposition

It has been clearly shown that there is no clear need for the project. It has also been clearly shown that there are at least 10 lower-cost alternatives and very strong public opposition.

Given these compelling facts, it is probable that all parties "Acted in Bad Faith" and did not honour basic tenets of the"social contract," that of BC Hydro providing electricity under socially acceptable conditions.

As a consequence and as a result of a recent election and impending change of government and management of BC Hydro, it is probable that the Site C project will soon be paused and or terminated. The consequences are: all work must stop and equipment orders delayed, renegotiated or cancelled.

To continue with further work may be greatly to your detriment. You are being asked to withdraw your services and goods at the earliest possible time, to prevent failure of payment, as such services and goods will not be necessary.

FURTHER – any contracts entered into beyond this date by yourselves, jointly or severally, will not be honoured by the residents of British Columbia.

Signed

Roger Bryenton, P. Eng,(former). MBA
BC Resident, 778-232-1326, Vancouver.

How spirit inspired an ecology centre





The author (L) and others strolling in the young orchard with Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj when he inaugurated the Meditation & Ecology Centre in 2010.

by Arran Stephens

Whenever a new person walks through the gates of the Science of Spirituality Meditation and Ecology Centre in Richmond, one often hears the words, "I never knew such a place existed. It's so peaceful and the gardens so beautiful."

In 2005, this haven was a barren, shuttered school, with a history going back to 1904. Feral rabbits had undermined the foundations while rats ran along littered hallways. The traffic roaring along Steveston Highway was hardly conducive to meditation, contemplation and fresh air! Neither did we have sufficient funds at the time to carry out a purchase. But there was hope, wild hope! To critics, I said, "We have a vision; let's make it a reality."

Our eclectic group was inspired to take this step under the loving guidance of Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, a living Master in an ancient lineage of spiritual adepts. His immediate predecessors, Sant Darshan Singh Ji and Sant Kirpal Singh Ji, were revered Masters with whom several of us had studied as well. Despite the small size of our local charity, we took the plunge to purchase this place that spoke to us at some very deep level. Generous donations and effort flowed in from members, at exactly the right time, unexpectedly, if not miraculously. Thus began the physical genesis of the SOS Meditation and Ecology Centre. And to create it took a great deal of sweat equity. Gardens were dug and planted by volunteers; shoulder to shoulder, brothers and sisters laboured together, despite having families and full-time careers. Over the following years, beautiful gardens were established and every inch of the old building and roof were gutted, restored and added to. For noise mitigation, we brought in 50 truckloads of topsoil, built a fertile berm, a fence on top and a tall cedar hedge for privacy.

> The Meditation & Ecology Centre has become a beacon of light and love in a materialistic society where seekers find peace, joy, help in meditation, fellowship and an opportunity to grow spiritually.

Attendance at the free talks, seminars and meditation sessions quadrupled. To accommodate growth, two large meditation/Satsang rooms were created, one for English (with Spanish subtitles) and one for Hindi-Punjabi language programs; a commercial-grade kitchen and dining atrium for over 100 people were added, and an Ecology of the Soul library, a children's room, outdoor play area and eco-parking lot followed.

Free organic gardening, vegetarian cooking and ecology classes held at the Centre are given from time to time. All organic produce from the garden is used in the Langar, a communal kitchen that serves free vegetarian meals to 75 to 100 people each Sunday.

From a wishful dream and a loving handful, this special place, with its verdant gardens, became a reality. The Centre has become a beacon of light and love in a materialistic society, where seekers find peace, joy, help in meditation, fellowship and an opportunity to grow spiritually.

How the Spirit inspired an ecology centre is embodied in this verse by Sant Darshan Singh:

"I started alone on the journey of love,
filled with faith and zeal;
At every step, travellers joined me,
and soon we became a caravan!"

The SOS Meditation & Ecology Centre is run on Seva, or selfless service, and strengthened through the practice of meditation on the inner Light and Sound, initiation into which is given by a living Master of this science. The two combined enable steady, inner progress. Indeed, the purpose of life is to realize the true self and the Creator, while serving the community and those in need. This summer, seekers are welcome to meet and hear Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, July 1 & 2 at the Chan Centre at UBC.

In service.

Arran Stephens is a Canadian entrepreneur, author, philanthropist, organic gardener, advocate for GMO labelling and co-founder of Nature's Path, a leading manufacturer of organic foods.

Events: July 1 & 2 , 2:30pm – All are invited to meet Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj in Vancouver for two public talks at the Chan Centre for Performing Arts, University of British Columbia, 6265 Crescent Rd. On July 2, the public talk is followed by Initiation into Meditation on the Inner Light and Sound. All events are free. For more information, see centrefold ad on page 12.



Work less and help the planet

In 1926, US automaker Henry Ford reduced his employees' workweek from six eight-hour days to five, with no pay cuts. It's something workers and labour unions had been calling for and it followed previous reductions in work schedules that had been as high as 84 to 100 hours over seven days a week.

Ford wasn't responding to worker demands; he was being a businessman. He expected increased productivity and knew workers with more time and money would buy and use the products they were making. It was a way of spurring consumerism and productivity to increase profits, and it succeeded. Ford, then one of America's largest employers, was ahead of his time; most workers in North America and elsewhere didn't get a 40-hour workweek until after the Second World War.

Since standardization of the 40-hour workweek in the mid-20th century, everything has changed but the hours. If anything, many people are working even longer hours, especially in North America. This has severe repercussions for human health and well-being, as well as the environment.

Until the Second World War, it was common for one person in a household, usually the oldest male, to do wage work full time. Now, women make up 42 percent of Canada's full-time workforce. Technology has made a lot of work redundant, with computers and robots doing many tasks previously performed by humans.

We continue to work the same long hours as 20th century labourers, depleting ever more of Earth's resources.

People get money from bank machines, scan groceries at automated checkouts and book travel online. Many people now spend most or all of their workdays in front of a computer.

Well into the 21st century, we continue to work the same long hours as 20th century labourers, depleting ever more of Earth's resources to produce more goods that we must keep working to buy, use and replace in a seemingly endless cycle of toil and consumerism.

It's time to pause and consider better ways to live like shifting from fossil-fuelled lifestyles with which our consumer-based workweeks are connected; it would have been easier to change had we done so gradually.

The UK think tank, New Economics Foundation, argues that a standard 21-hour workweek would address a number of interconnected problems: "overwork, unemployment, over-consumption, high carbon emissions, low well-being, entrenched inequalities, and the lack of time to live sustainably, to care for each other, and simply to enjoy life."

Beyond helping break the cycle of constant consumption and allowing people to focus on things that matter – like friends, family and time in nature – a shorter workweek would also reduce rush-hour traffic and gridlock… And it would give people more options for family care. (David Suzuki Foundation employees enjoy a four-day workweek.)

Economic systems that require constant growth on a finite planet don't make sense. The fact that the world's richest 62 people now have more wealth than the poorest half of the world's population is absurd and tragic.

It's time for a paradigm shift in our economic thinking.

Excerpted from "Long work hours don't work for people or the planet." **David Suzuki** is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Senior Editor Ian Hanington. David Suzuki's latest book is **Just Cool It!: The Climate Crisis and What We Can Do** (Greystone Books), co-written with Ian Hanington. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

LETTERS

Is BC Hydro's Site C Dam on the Peace River "In Bad Faith" and does it uphold our concept of "Social Contract"?

To all parties:

Contractors
Acciona Canada
Samsung C&T
Petrowest
Voith Hydro
BC Hydro
BC Hydro Board of Directors
Government of BC

Contractors: You have knowingly entered into contracts with BC Hydro, the BC Provincial Government, and possibly others, to provide goods and services for the Site C power project.

At the time of your signature to these contracts, you were well aware of opposition to the project:

- multiple legal challenges,
- over 100,000 signatories , over 300 scientists and scholars, the Royal Society, numerous organizations,
- the Union of BC Municipalities, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs,
- no increase in domestic use of electricity for the past ten (10) years; no need for the project,
- myriad alternatives: Columbia River, Burrard Thermal, upgrades to other BC dams and power houses, and electricity conservation - 2x the power at 1/6th the cost,
- other renewable sources of electricity solar and wind and geothermal.

You were also aware that 1) The former Chair of the Joint Review Panel, Dr. Harry Swain, 2) a former CEO of BC Hydro, and 3) former Premier Harcourt all publicly opposed.

You were aware that First Nations Treaty rights were not being honoured, and that First Nations were strongly opposed to the project.

You were aware that the Government of BC 1) excluded review of the project by the BC Utilities Commission, 2) excluded land areas to be affected from review by the Agricultural Land Commission, and 3) excluded both the Columbia River Treaty and Burrard Thermal power from consideration.

BC Hydro, BC Hydro Board of Directors, and BC Government: You have intentionally created a situation which circumvents essential aspects of major project approvals. That approval process forms the basis of "social contracts," being those developments that improve the standard of living while being "socially acceptable and desirable." The aspects of project review and approval denied:

- Review by government established agencies, such as BCUC.
- Using legislation to exclude specific areas of review to enable projects to proceed.
- Using legislation to facilitate approval of projects.
- Ignoring legal challenges to projects.

Acting in Bad Faith?

Contractors, BC Hydro, BC Hydro Board of Directors and BC Government

Despite this knowledge, all parties wilfully agreed to proceed with signing contracts for goods and services to build the Site C project.

A serious legal question, is raised: "Did the various parties *continued pg 17 ...*

Events

For rates & placements email **editor@commonground.ca**

JUNE 8
Free events: Wesak Festival May 10. Festival of Humanity June 8. Introduction followed by group meditation. 7PM, Central Library, 350 Georgia St., Peter Kaye Room, www.share-international.ca

JUN 16-18
Basic Holistic Foot Reflexology Certificate Weekend Course: $375+ GST. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

JUN 22
Free multi-media presentation – The Gathering of the Forces of the Light: UFOs and our Space Brothers, the New Age of Aquarius, The Coming of a World Teacher. Central Library, 350 Georgia St., P. Kaye Room, www.share-international.org

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Online Open Houses JUN 22 & JUL 18.
Hosted by the Institute of Shamanic Medicine.
RSVP by email to info@shamanicmedicine.ca
www.shamanicmedicine.ca

JUN 23
Book Signing With Author/Channel Linda Nardelli, 1825 West 16th, Canadian Centre for Peace. Friday, June 23rd, 7-9:30PM.
Register: 604-802-6390.

JUL 1
"Building Bridges Through Meditation," Public talk by visiting spiritual Master, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, 2:30PM, Chan Centre for Performing Arts, University of British Columbia, 6265 Crescent Road,Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z1.
Event is free and open to all.
For further information, please contact: Lindab@sos.org or call 604-985-5840.

JUL 2
"Explore Spiritual Realms" – Public talk by visiting spiritual Master, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, 2:30PM, followed by Initiation (in-depth instructions for meditation on the inner Light and Sound), Chan Centre for Performing Arts, University of British Columbia, 6265 Crescent Road, Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z1.
Events are free and open to all.
For further information, please contact: Lindab@sos.org or call 604-985-5840.

JUL 7-9
Preparing the Ground for Meditation with Dr. Ashwani Kumar. At Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada.
Beautiful oceanfront setting near Victoria.
Register at www.krishnamurti-canada.ca
Email programs@krishnamurti-canada.ca, 250-744-3354.

JUL 12
Past Life Exploration with Rifa Hodgson: Re-visit YOUR PAST- Heal Your PRESENT. 6:30-9:30PM, West Vancouver, Ambleside, Silk Purse, 1570 Argyle Ave. Registration $75/70
www.lifebetweenlives.ca/Events, 1-888- 606-8463.

JUL 13-16
The 40th Anniversary of the Vancouver Folk Music Festival brings a world of music to one of the world's most beautiful festival settings, right in your own back yard – Jericho Beach Park. Join us for the best weekend of your summer. thefestival.bc.ca

JUL 15
Clearmind presents an exclusive screening of Yalom's Cure: A Guide to Happiness. 4:30PM, Unity of Vancouver, 5840 Oak Street @ 41st. $10/ Eventbrite, $15/door. www.clearmind.com, 604-513-9001, Ext. 1.

JUL 21-23
Healing Your Trauma with Lynn Fraser (www.nondualinquiry.com) At Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada.
Beautiful oceanfront setting near Victoria.
Register at www.krishnamurti-canada.ca
Email programs@krishnamurti-canada.ca, 250-744-3354.

AUG 12-13
One Love Westcoast Festival: A global celebration through Afro/Latin and Reggae music and culture. Join the movement, participate and bring your families. Swangard Stadium, Patterson Station. Tickets: myshowpass.com/onelove www.latinsummerfest.com
Friday VIP Concert with Sentiments, KuJ and Antidoping Mexico at the Rickshaw. Capacity limits, Security at the gates. Hosted by VanMusic and Latinos in Action Foundation

AUG 26-27
Become a Certified Life Coach or Executive Coach: In Vancouver. This 2-day intensive will teach you everything you need to know to succeed. Only Certified Coaches Federation graduates earn the esteemed Certified Life Coach Practitioner designations.
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SEP 14-17
"How to Live to Be 100: Rejuvenating Yoga Retreat – Loon Lake, Vancouver. Includes meditation, gentle yoga, workshops, accommodation & meals. With author, yoga teacher, health coach & Reiki Master Agneta Dyck. Register: agnetadyck.com

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778-379-9920, SoulMindBodyCentre.com











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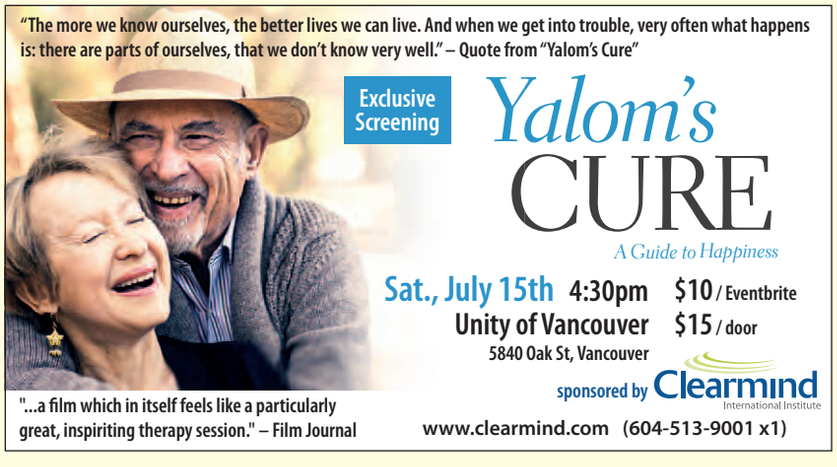
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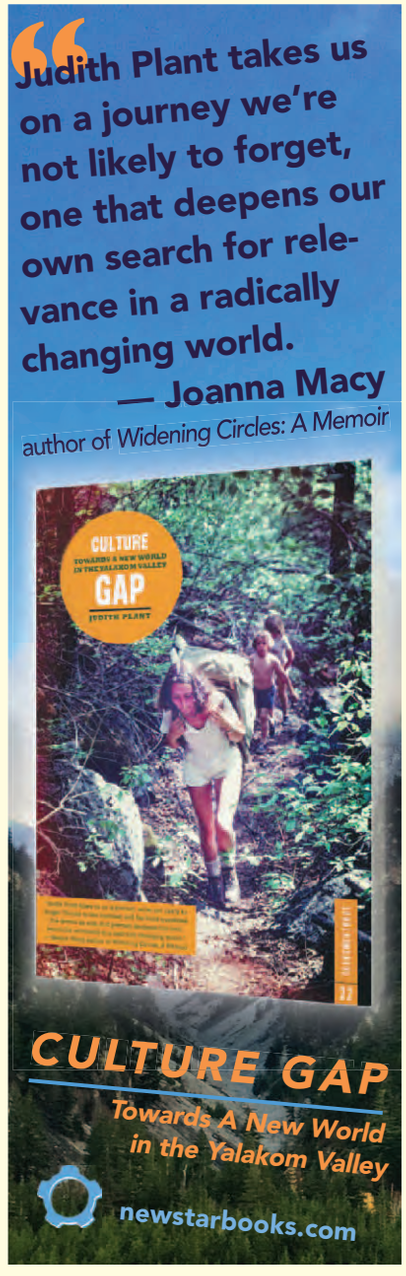














NAFTA change could limit digital freedom

We're just over four months into Donald Trump's presidency and there's already a great deal of concern around his digital agenda. On privacy, Trump's Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly has overseen a sharp spike in invasive digital devices searches at the border and is even threatening to force travellers to routinely hand over social media passwords.

Meanwhile, Ajit Pai, head of the Federal Communications Commission, is aiming to overturn critical consumer safeguards, namely Net Neutrality, that hundreds of millions of Internet users depend on.

And if that isn't enough to keep you up at night, a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) now looks imminent. First implemented in 1994, this trade deal is huge for Canada and the wrangling over whether, and how, it should be updated is sure to dominate headlines.

From a digital rights perspective, a number of big concerns come along with a renegotiation of NAFTA. Canadians enjoy significantly stronger protections for privacy and Net Neutrality than their US counterparts, policies that could be placed at risk in the upcoming talks. We also enjoy a more flexible copyright system than our neighbours.

Recent US legislation dramatically weakened rules governing the privacy of Internet users, enabling ISPs to track and sell their subscribers' information, including their browsing history. In Canada, we have much stronger rules to prevent such abuses. Professor Michael Geist has warned the US is likely to use the NAFTA talks to force Canada to match its approach.

> Recent US legislation dramatically weakened rules governing the privacy of Internet users.

Canada also has some of the strongest pro-consumer Net Neutrality safeguards in the world, recently reinforced by the CRTC's landmark decision to ban telecom providers from engaging in discriminatory pricing practices. In contrast, the US, under Trump, is moving to rapidly dismantle its own Net Neutrality safeguards; again, the concern is that they'll use NAFTA to force Canada in line with an agenda that prioritizes the narrow interests of US telecom giants over the broader interests of Canadian consumers.

Perhaps most troublingly, the US looks all-but-certain to use NAFTA to try to impose draconian new intellectual property rules on Canada. In fact, as professor Geist notes, the US' starting position for NAFTA looks very similar to their stance on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This is especially worrying given the TPP proposed extending Canada's copyright terms by 20 years, robbing our public domain and costing our economy hundreds of millions.

With so many fundamental issues on the table, it's fair to say Canada's overall ability to chart its own digital policy direction is now at stake. Over recent years, Canada's digital direction has diverged significantly from that of the US and this divergence has unequivocally benefitted Canadian Internet users.

That's why it's essential Canada's negotiating team not only push back against US demands on the specific policy areas outlined above, but also that it make clear Canada will continue to shape a digital policy agenda that works for Canadians and not allow itself to be forced into line with America's anti-consumer approach.

At OpenMedia, we're watching developments closely. You can stay in the loop at OpenMedia.org

David Christopher is Interim Communications and Campaigns Director for OpenMedia, a non-profit organization that works to keep the Internet open, affordable and surveillance-free.

*...**Clean Tech** from pg. 3*

Americans don't lag far behind in the recognition of the urgent and essential need to tank fossil fuels.

A leading light in analyzing and predicting the impact of clean disruptive technology is Stanford economist, Tony Seba. In a jaw-dropping, comprehensive, two-hour viral video (http://tonyseba.com/portfolio-item/clean-disruption-of-energy-transportation/), he dramatically illustrates our future in the first few minutes. From a photograph of a New York's Fifth Avenue, taken in 1900, he asks his audience to pick out the automobile in the packed crowd of horse-drawn vehicles. Then, in a picture from 1913, in the same location, it is just as difficult to spot the one horse amidst the automobiles that materialized in just 13 years. The experience is highly recommended.

Seba earned his reputation through his spot-on predictions of the solar boom. His current projections, based on technology cost curves, business model and product innovation, include: 1) By 2030, all new energy will be provided by solar or wind. 2) All new mass-market vehicles will be electric and autonomous (self-driving) or semi-autonomous. 3) The car market will shrink by 80%. 4) Gasoline, natural gas and coal will be obsolete (nuclear is already obsolete). 5) Up to 80% of highways and parking space won't be needed. 6) And not only will the auto insurance industry be disrupted, car ownership and the taxi industry will be obsolete.

Not fanciful when you consider expensive automobiles now sit idle, on average, 20 hours a day and electric vehicles are price competitive, especially when you factor in maintenance. Just before going to press, *Common Ground* had a conversation with Guy Dauncey, an author – his latest book is *Journey to the Future: A Better World Is Possible* – and activist. Dauncey has developed a positive vision of a sustainable future and he is translating that vision into action. "Guess how many people in the Lower Mainland have joined the handful of car-sharing opportunities?" he asked. "The answer is 120,000!"

Dauncey had another question: "What if BC and Canada – like Norway – had governments that not only subsidized the purchase of electric vehicles, but also provided HOV lane access, free parking and free charging (from street light lampposts)?"

Our economy no longer provides what most of us, unlike Christy Clark, consider real, good jobs. Fighting climate change supports families, sustains communities and provides a more equitable distribution of wealth, which our current economy no longer provides.

In his most recent book, *Just Cool It*!, David Suzuki (co-author Ian Hanington) writes, "The economy is a human invention, a tool that can be changed when it no longer suits our needs. The environment is the very air, water, land and diversity of plant and animal life we cannot live without. Why not work to build a healthy prosperous economy that protects things?"

Drawing on new innovations such as grid power systems, biochar soil technologies and algae-based biofuels, the authors outline practical, forward-thinking solutions for not only resolving the climate crisis, but also to create more meaningful work to directly benefit more people. All that is missing is that people demand change and action, as they apparently have just done in BC. When finally this happens, the results will be monumental.

When looking for a new job, start by changing your mindset and searching for something society needs. And think disruptive. In the aftermath of the provincial election, it's past time to demand that elected public servants not only take big money out of a reformed electoral process, but that they also take disruptive action in order to catch up and build a better, re-imagined, BC.

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola Island-based banjo player, gardener, writer and author of **Our Clinic.**

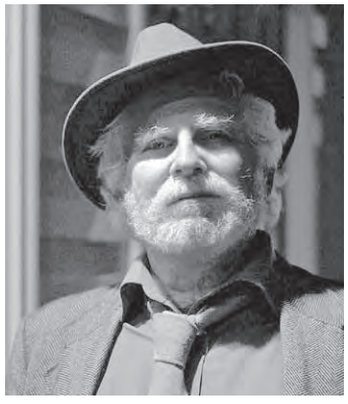
Bob Bossin vs "Kinder Morgan"

by Bruce Mason

What history will refer to as "Kinder Morgan," it will also record and judge as one of the most significant stories during Canada's 150 years. The highly volatile issue will help define us and our role in the contemporary world, specifically highlighting if we are part of the problem or the solution.

But to fully understand it, one must experience Bob Bossin's explosively effective 10-minute viral video, curiously entitled, *Only one bear in a hundred bites, but they don't come in order*.

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOyceZiLF-Y)



See Bob Bossin at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, July 13-16.

The 100,000 or so folks and groups who have experienced it and shared it on Facebook – 12,000 on YouTube – keenly advised others to do the same, including the Green Party, Council of Canadians, former BC cabinet minister Rafe Mair, the Dogwood Initiative and myriad like-minded others.

Bob's compilation of seemingly endless, terrifying tank farm explosions and accompanying text gives voice to the widespread fear and horror on the west coast about the explosion possibilities. Green leader Elizabeth May has characterized it as "totally stupid." It being the construction of a 1,150-kilometre pipeline from Edmonton to BC's Lower Mainland (western Canada's most densely populated area) to carry toxic diluted bitumen (300,000 to 890,000 barrels per day) through more than 100 First Nations mostly pristine territories. It will increase the traffic of massive tankers, seven-fold, smack dab in the Port of Vancouver (second busiest in the nation) and into the international treasure of the Salish Sea, for the sake of generating 50 permanent jobs, despite plummeting oil prices, and the fact that a spill can't be cleaned. All of which seriously jeopardizes the global initiative to reduce the carbon emissions that are killing life on the planet (See http://commonground.ca/christy-justin-kinder-morgan-take-hike/)

May played a role in *Only one bear in a hundred bites, but they don't come in order*. Bossin was asked to write a song for an Earth Day celebration in April. Instead, the "Old Folksinger,"created the video. It received a standing ovation from an audience, including May, who wanted to see it again and again. And so it was posted.

Bossin strives to show Canadians who support the foolhardy and reckless pipe dream why people in BC vow to fight to the death to stop it. But there's not much reaction from Alberta to Ottawa where selfie-PM Justin Trudeau defies science by petulantly insisting that "Kinder Morgan" is "safe", rejecting common sense and economics by claiming it's in "Canada's best interests."

The late great dean of folksingers, Pete Seeger, once observed, "Not many people can write songs that are funny, informative and inspiring at the same time. Bossin does." Pity Pete never lived to see the video. He was a big fan of Bossin's *Show Us the Length* and he performed the hilarious, profeminist composition. He was also well aware of Bob's anthemic *Sulphur Passage*, which helped save the Clayoquot wilderness and brought down the BC NDP government of Mike Harcourt. Bossin, co-founder of the legendary Stringband, pioneered crowdfunding and independent artist-controlled recordings with Canadian themes.

It's entirely appropriate and just that he be part of the **Vancouver Folk Music Festival's 40th anniversary** (July 13-16). He's played there dozens of times in his 50 years of writing and performing. Folks who attend "The greatest show on Earth" (*Rolling Stone*) will enjoy some 60+ musical acts from 20 countries on seven beachfront stages. And we all have that video to share.

US may hit emission targets before Canada

by Tom Sandborn

As Jeff Rubin, former economist for CIBC World Markets and author of a number of books, including *The Carbon Bubble* and *The End of Growth*, prepared to speak to a full house of fund managers, bankers and NGO figures interested in responsible investment at a meeting sponsored by the Responsible Investment Association (https://www.riacanada.ca/) early on the morning of June 1, the room was buzzing with excitement and worry about whether Donald Trump would use a speech scheduled for later in the day to announce the US was going to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, also known as COP 21. Trump did make that tragically misguided announcement a few hours later.

But the well known and often controversial energy sector expert Rubin had other things on his mind. In fact, he told the packed ballroom full of fans of responsible investment that the US under Donald Trump was more likely to hit emission reduction goals than Canada under Trudeau!

(https://www.carbonbrief.org/paris-2015-tracking-country-climate-pledges)

According to this graphic posted on the Climate Action Tracker website (http://www.climateactiontracker.org/), without cuts more serious than those committed to in the Paris Agreement, global temperatures will spiral up to an average of more than two degrees higher than current world averages. Most experts agree that increases that high in global temperatures will lead to catastrophic climate change, melting polar ice with ocean level increases likely to drown many coastal cities.

Rubin said, "I believe that the US, despite Trump pulling out of COP 21, is better positioned to hit their emission targets than Canada."

Steve Kux, Climate Change and Clean Energy Policy Analyst for the David Suzuki Foundation, told *Common Ground* on June 5 that Rubin made good points in his Vancouver speech.

"Canada has made some positive moves on climate change," Kux said, "but we need a cohesive and coherent national policy and our continued subsidies to fossil fuels and approval for pipeline expansion take us in the wrong direction. Given the positive steps being taken by American states and cities on this file, Rubin may well be right about Canada doing worse than the USA on getting emissions down unless we get our priorities straight."

Meanwhile, Rubin says, BC has become a major conduit for highly polluting thermal coal from the US to Asia, and the recent federal approval of Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion is not only environmentally dangerous, it also makes no sense economically.

Rubin said the often-voiced argument from fans of the fossil fuel industries that Canada needs more pipelines in order to "get a stranded resource to tidewater" for export abroad makes no sense to him as an economist. "It is, frankly, BS," he said in an interview before his speech.

Most of the petroleum Canada exports is bitumen from the tar sands, he said, and that product is priced well below other oils in both the Asian and European markets, a reality that would leave tar sands bitumen stranded by economics and Canada holding the bag for the environmental and economic costs associated with building more pipeline infrastructure. He said Canada should build no more pipelines.

Kux also agreed with Rubin's rejection of the argument that Canada has to build more pipelines.

"Tar sands bitumen is not stranded by the lack of pipelines to the coast," he said. "Every barrel of bitumen exported loses money and more pipelines won't change that."

Tom Sandborn lives in Vancouver and is interested in energy issues. Contact tos65@telus.net

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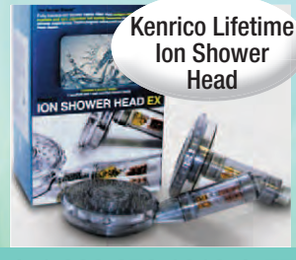
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